

**BOROUGH OF DUMONT
BERGEN COUNTY, N.J.
SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
MAY 8, 2012
7:00 PM**

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:15PM

Flag Salute; Silent Prayer

Sunshine Law: This special meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. Notices of this special meeting of the Governing Body were sent to *The Record* and *The Ridgewood News*, posted on the Borough website and filed with the Borough of Dumont.

Roll Call:

Council members: Brophy, Carrick, Freeman, Hayes, Stylianou, Zamechansky-present
Mayor Kelly-present

The Mayor stated that the purpose of this meeting was for a proposed resolution:

WHEREAS, the Borough of Dumont ("Dumont") is in the process of preparing its 2012 budget; and

WHEREAS, there exists a budgetary shortfall of \$759,000, and

WHEREAS, all Dumont departments have, over the past two years, made monetary concessions with the exception of the Police Department; and

WHEREAS, Dumont has determined that it can reduce its police force without any resultant loss of service to its residents; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:14-143 governs a municipalities determination to decrease the number of members or officers of the police department; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:14-143 requires that if the service of any police officer is terminated, such termination shall be in the inverse order of their appointment,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough of Dumont that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-143, the governing body for reasons of economy hereby decreases the number of members of the police department by two; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the services of Dumont Police Officers Eric R. Abrahamsen and Richard Correa are hereby terminated, which termination shall take effect upon completion of negotiations with the PBA regarding its implementation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Dumont Police Officers Eric R. Abrahamsen and Richard Correa are hereby placed on a special employment list pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-143.

RICE notices were sent to the two police officers who requested a public hearing.

The Mayor opened the meeting to the public and requested that anyone who wishes to speak should state their name and address for the record.

1. Officer Abrahamsen, Dumont Police Department, asked Mayor Kelly if he authorized these RICE notices. The response was yes. Officer Abrahamsen asked if there was a vote to change the RICE notices from four officers to two officers. Mr. Shahdanian explained that there does not have to be a vote to send out RICE notices. Mr.

Abrahamsen asked the cost to send out eight RICE notices. He stated that some of the Council have made concessions-Councilwoman Zamechansky gave up her health insurance, Council members Stylianou and Brophy gave up their stipends. Councilman Carrick stated that he is donating his stipend to a person in town who is ill. Mr. Abrahamsen asked who among the council members receives health insurance. Council members Hayes and Freeman stated that they do and he asked the cost of their health insurance and the amount they contribute toward it. He stated that recently the PBA were in negotiations with the Mayor and Council. He was advised that the negotiations ceased following a vote: 3 in favor stopping negotiations, 2 in favor of continuing and 1 abstention. He asked Councilman Brophy why he abstained. Councilman Brophy responded he chose to abstain due to public perception because he has a family member on the police force. Officer Abrahamsen asked Councilman Brophy if he abstained from voting on that since he is a member of the Fire Department and Ambulance Corps. The Councilman responded that he does not sign vouchers for Police, Fire Department or Ambulance Corps and as far as he remembers he does not vote on issues related to these departments. The officer stated he wished Councilman Brophy did not abstain because it could have helped him out and would not have affected his family member.

2. Liz Marchese, Larch Avenue, asked the cost of the two policemen including salaries, benefits, etc. and the cost per household. The response from Councilman Freeman was \$208,000 and \$44.00 per year. Ms. Marchese asked if services such as the DARE and Adopt-a-Cop programs would be affected. This would be a big loss to the kids for \$44.00 per year. Councilman Freeman explained that the budget had a shortfall of \$1.7 million. Next year's budget will be worse. Our revenues have gone down \$530,000 and our expenses have increased \$1.2 million. Either our revenues have to increase or our expenses have to decrease. Ms. Marchese is concerned that the twelve hour shifts would change and there wouldn't be enough officers to patrol the parks.
3. Brian Joyce, president of the Dumont PBA, stated for the record that the PBA has made concessions: one and one half percent of their paycheck goes to the Borough to help offset expenses per Governor Christie; they have switched to a twelve hour schedule which has reduced overtime; training is now done while they are working which has reduced overtime; revenue has gone up because of an increase in summonses due to proactivity of the police department.
4. Eric Abrahamsen, 66 Prospect Avenue, asked for clarification on the amount the budget is above the cap. He appealed to the Council to rethink the decision to cut the two police officers and to go back and crunch the numbers. He spoke of last year's budget and compared the furlough days given by the DPW and the amount the Police Department would have given if they had given up their clothing allowance. He asked if there was an attorney present at the negotiations to which Councilman Carrick responded no.

Motion to close to the public: Councilman Carrick

Second: Councilman Freeman

All in favor.

Councilman Freeman stated that the Council is representing the 17,500 residents of Dumont. They have to consider what is best for the greatest number of people. The Borough has to stick to the 2% cap. He stated for the record that he can definitely foresee regionalization of police, schools, etc. within five to ten years.

Councilman Carrick said that this is the hardest decision any of the Council has had to

make. They are here to make decisions in the best interest of the entire community. The largest percentage of our line items is police services. He said he wouldn't feel he is doing his job for the taxpayers of Dumont if he doesn't take a stand for a change that would be lasting. They tried negotiating but it did not work out. He asked Chief Venezio if he could man his police department and still provide the town with the protection they have had in the past in the event the two police officers were laid off. The Chief responded that they are being asked to do the same job with less people-something has to give. However, every member of the police department will do their best to maintain the services the people of Dumont are accustomed to.

Councilwoman Zamechansky said she knows how hard it is to crunch the numbers. She had been on the Finance Committee for seven years. She's sorry it has come to this point. If there was a chance of going back into discussions with the PBA, she suggested it take place right after this meeting.

Councilman Stylianou stated that the Council is very disappointed that they have had to come to this vote. He had wanted to have an additional meeting in which the attorneys were involved. He expressed disappointment in the Council for not voting with Councilwoman Zamechansky and himself to have additional discussions and in the PBA for making requests they shouldn't have. In some of the discussions he's had with the PBA he felt there was some unreasonableness. He did, however, feel they could reach common ground had the discussions continued. He asked PBA president Joyce whether, in his opinion, it would be advantageous to have another meeting. He said he would renew his motion to have one more discussion. Before they take this vote they owe it to the police officers, the PBA, the citizens of Dumont and people sitting on the dais to make one last-ditch effort.

Councilman Hayes said that nobody wants to cut anyone but the numbers speak for themselves. We are too far over budget. This year is bad; next year will be worse. He disagrees with Councilman Stylianou's suggestion to have another meeting. It is inevitable the two police officers will have to go and to drag this out another month is unfair to them.

Councilman Freeman asked what the timeframe would be if they negotiated again since there are budgetary time constraints.

PBA president Joyce was asked whether they would be willing to meet to negotiate after the meeting and take a vote. He responded they could meet but the vote could not take place tonight.

The Mayor asked for a motion to go into closed session to discuss negotiations: Councilman Stylianou, seconded by Councilman Freeman. All in favor.
The public meeting resumed at 8:15PM

Mayor Kelly explained to the public that the Council will take a vote on the resolution before them but after this meeting there will be further negotiations. Therefore, the resolution will be held in abeyance until Friday when something is hopefully worked out.

Motion to adopt Resolution #12-132-Termination of Employment of Officers Abrahamsen and Correa: Councilman Carrick
Second: Councilman Freeman

Councilman Carrick stated that negotiations would take place immediately following this meeting and would end when there is some resolution. President Joyce will bring it to the PBA, which will have until Friday afternoon to take a vote.

Councilman Stylianou clarified that if an agreement is reached, this resolution would be repealed. If not, it goes into full force and effect.

Roll call vote: Council members Carrick, Freeman, Hayes, Stylianou, Zamechansky-yes

Councilman Brophy-abstained

Motion to adjourn: Councilman Stylianou

Second: Councilman Freeman

All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Susan Connelly, RMC

Municipal Clerk